

MORPETH
Rural District Council.

ANNUAL
REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1921,

BY THE

Medical Officer of Health
(J. P. Philip, O.B.E., M.D., D.P.H.,)

AND

The Sanitary Inspectors
(A. Adams, A.S.I. & H. Walker, R.S.I.)

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1922.

MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITARY CONDITIONS FOR THE YEAR 1921.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to lay before you my Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions in your district for the year 1921.

We are now, I hope, beginning to emerge from the black time following the war. Building of New Houses has begun; Sewage Disposal and Water Works are in progress. There are, however, great financial difficulties;—loans are difficult to obtain; and many Housing Schemes and other proposed improvements have had to be given up. Overcrowding is also still very apparent.

Population. — In my last year's report I stated that the estimated population was far below the actual one, and so it turned out at the Census. The estimate was 14,800, whereas the actual Census was 18,052.

Physical Features. — The district is a large one, extending over more than 74,740 acres. From the seaboard it lies between the Rivers Coquet to the north and the Wansbeck to the south, ten miles apart, and inland it runs nearly 20 miles. Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea cut out an oblong area three miles long by one mile wide, with a population of between 30,000 and 40,000. This vast population, wedged into the Rural District, has caused much trouble with drainage, which I shall discuss in its place.

The elevation rises gradually from the sea level, towards Cambo in the west, to some 700 feet. The North Eastern part from Stobswood to Broomhill is very flat, and there are great difficulties in drainage.

Divisions of the District. — The industries divide the district into Colliery and Agricultural, and the highway from Morpeth to Felton separates the one from the other. For statistical purposes the County Asylum forms a community by itself, but it must be

included in the district, so that, with its high death-rate, added to the residential rate, our local rate appears much augmented, higher than it actually is.

Housing. --- Never have I known such a crying need for houses. The Government Housing Scheme has killed all private (or commercial) enterprise in building, and supplying their workmen with accommodation. As I have said over and over again, every industry should pay its own way. It will take years to recover from the blow dealt by this Housing Scheme. As trade revives, however, and the unsettled conditions between capital and labour subside. I hope to see a revival in owners providing their men with good and convenient houses, not perhaps up to the Government requirements, but still, with good, well-ventilated and well-drained houses of three to five rooms. There should be accommodation for newly-married couples in three-roomed houses and for families in five to six roomed houses. There is now a tendency that way in our newer colliery villages. Rows of three-roomed houses and others of four and five rooms for larger families, are needed. This is the right way, and in this way only can we expect Companies to house their employees well and pay them adequate wages.

In my last year's report I commented on the insanitary conditions in several districts, more especially in the colliery areas. With the exception of some improvements at Pegswood and Longhirst Colliery little has been done to alter those conditions. At Pegswood improvements are in progress, and the old sewage disposal system will be closed and a new and improved system is being planned. At Longhirst Colliery the houses have been put in order, but pitfalls have affected the levels so that doors have jammed and floors have altered to such an extent that alterations have been necessary. The houses which were planned and were to be erected have sadly been reduced for want of the promised Government support. Half the number proposed at Pegswood and Widdrington, and two at Thirston are so far the only ones erected. Perhaps the coal strike of last year has been the heaviest of all blows to building. I had hoped by this time that the wooden houses might have been closed, but as yet there is no other accommodation. The same holds at Widdrington Colliery, South Broomhill, and Store Row. The people cannot be put out unless there is other accommodation for them.

At North Seaton Colliery many improvements have been carried out. New yards, cemented and clean, new privies and enclosed drains, have greatly improved the place. An improvement of the roads there would be welcomed. I might say the same of the Pegswood roads, which are very bad indeed.

At Stobswood, Bus Row, Widdrington, and all the Broomhill side roads should be laid with tar macadam or some such solid and even surface. This is more important than might seem. Nearly all

the streets are made of ashes and coal dust. Each house has its load of coal dumped on these soft surface roads, and when these are shovelled in, a heap or a hollow is left, especially in wet weather, with the result that the roads get very uneven, and after rain there are stagnant pools all over, with the result that houses cannot be kept clean when everyone comes in with boots both wet and dirty.

Houses are required in every district, and the supply is so exceedingly low that overcrowding is still very bad. There is no doubt about the cause. Want of money since the war, the unsettled conditions of trade, strikes and, perhaps worst of all, the Government's Housing Scheme. It is to be hoped that soon, when trade revives, that Colliery Companies will build houses for their employees. There are signs of this in the Ashington area,—at Linton and Ellington, where, I believe, great extensions will be made.

Scavenging and Disposal of Sewage.—The Scavenging and Disposal of Sewage has been, on the whole, satisfactory. The drainage of the north eastern part of the district has only just been started. Here I may say that the pollution of the Lyne Burn from Ashington sewage has been greatly modified, and when I last examined it I found the water clear and free from crude sewage.

Water Supply.—The New Water Supply for the same area has also been commenced, and its completion is promised in six months.

Proposed Fever Hospital.—The proposed Fever Hospital has never gone further than plans. No money for it can be got from Government loans. I think that joining with several neighbouring Councils and having a Union Hospital, is the only way we shall be able to obtain the great advantage which a Hospital would provide.

Requirements of the District.

1. First and foremost, new houses,—a thousand would not be too many, and all in the Eastern district. We would welcome three-roomed, four-roomed and five-roomed houses. But they must be well built, well ventilated, and well drained.

2. The drainage in many places is bad, but the new scheme should do much to correct this. We shall hardly recognise the places when open and disgusting drains are not seen running down the streets.

3. We must have a Fever Hospital at an early date. The epidemic of Enteric Fever at Sheepwash clearly demonstrated that.

4. The adequate paving or tarring of all colliery roads. This would be a great comfort to the inhabitants, and more especially for school children.

5. I would like to see Baby Welfare Centres in all villages, or in good centres. Here I think the Government has made another false economy in not giving sufficient grants.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth - Rate.—The number of Births was 419 (12 illegitimate) of which 215 were male and 204 were female. This is equal to a birth-rate of 28.7 per 1,000.

Death - Rate.—The number of deaths amongst residents was 173, which is equal to a death-rate per 1,000 of 9.57. Including the Asylum, in which there were 94 deaths of non-residents, the death-rate was 14.9 per 1,000. There were 52 deaths in the Agricultural District, which is equal to an annual rate of 11.55 per 1,000. In the colliery area there were 121 deaths, which represents 8.92 per 1,000 population.

Infantile Death-Rate.—This is low for the year. There were 35 deaths in children under 12 months, which represents a rate per 1,000 children born of 83.53. This may be considered low, and should compare well with any other part of England.

Special Diseases.—For ready reference I have tabulated the most important diseases with the number and rate per 1,000. This compares favourably with former years.

DISEASES.	1919.		1920.		1921.	
	No. of Cases	Rate per 1000	No. of Cases	Rate per 1000	No. of Cases	Rate per 1000
Pulmonalis Phthisis	14	0.89	10	0.60	10	0.5
All Tubercular Diseases	18	1.2	18	1.2	11	0.5
All Respiratory Diseases	35	2.3	40	2.7	35	1.9
Cancer	18	1.2	14	0.94	21	1.1
Infectious Diseases	27	1.7	7	0.47	9	0.4
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	2	0.13	4	0.27	11	0.5

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of Infectious Diseases notified was 129, which was rather under the usual number.

The following are the cases:—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	10
Scarlatina	...	...	...	...	...	58
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	2
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	...	...	6
Malaria	...	...	...	...	...	1
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	...	...	11
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	29
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	10
Encaphalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	...	...	2

There was no serious epidemic except that of Enteric Fever of which I here reproduce the report I made at the time.



MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report by Dr. J. P. Philip, Medical Officer of Health, on Outbreak of Enteric Fever at Sheepwash.

4th December.

Two cases of Enteric Fever were notified at Sheepwash, dated November 15th, but as they were misdirected to the M.O. of Bedlington, there was some delay in my receiving them. On Sunday 20th, I visited the cases—two young men at Thompson's Buildings. On investigating, I found another child next door and two others at the Farm, very sick and doubtful cases. As there was no general Isolation Hospital in the Morpeth Rural District, I had to try elsewhere. After consulting the Vice-Chairman and other Councillors, we agreed to try and get them into Ashington Hospital. I got into communication with the M.O.H., who very kindly consulted his local Council, and I was allowed to use the Hospital and Ambulance on condition that the Morpeth Rural Council should pay expenses. Next day the two worst cases from Thompson's Buildings were removed, and afterwards, as other cases occurred, they were removed.

Next day I examined the water supply and found that at the Old Rectory there was a private pump to a deep well, but that all the houses (eight in number) were supplied by a tank some 500 yards

away in a field well above the village. I found that the field above had been top-dressed with town manure, and that the heavy rain early in November had carried this manure, almost in a crude state, directly into the tank which was some 20 inches below the level of the field road, and the manhole was covered with loose planks of wood. The supply to this tank is from a well some 300 yards across the field and is supplemented by surface drainage from the same field. The drains are clay field pipes and in some parts only "U" pipes, and all are laid without connections. This field has been top-dressed for years with manure scavenged from the ash pits of Choppington Guide Post, for which the farmer at Sheepwash has had the contract. I at once ordered that this water should not be used, and subsequently, by order of the County Medical Officer, it was entirely cut off. I took a sample of the water for bacteriological examination, but the result is not yet received (except an early note to say that *Bacillus Colli* was present.) The Sanitary Inspector made the tank safe from further flooding, but the saturation of the field and the supply of surface drainage from this field rendered the supply unsafe.

I asked the Chairman and a representative of the Council (Mr. Brodie) to meet me on the spot and to see for themselves the evident cause of the epidemic and to confirm and sanction my proceedings. I also called in the County Medical Officer (Dr. Whitley) and had his advice along with my neighbouring Medical Officer of Bedlington. We agreed as to the source of contamination, and Dr. Hudson was able to give the information that two houses in Choppington Guide Post, in his area, had Enteric Fever, and that the ash pits of those houses had been cleaned out and carted with the other manure to the field above the tank. No clearer proof was required, but samples were again taken of both water supplies, and also supplies for chemical analysis and bacteriological tests, and the suspected water was entirely cut off.

During the week fresh cases have occurred, so that up to date (4th December), eight cases have been notified, but I have three others under observation. I am now inoculating exposed persons.

Those three cases proved to be Enteric, so that 11 cases in all occurred. I inoculated all exposed persons I could reach, which was almost the whole population, and some from other districts who had been in contact with infected persons. The result was very satisfactory. No more cases were reported.

Your Obedient Servant,

J. P. PHILIP.

**TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF
THE COUNCIL.**

GENTLEMEN,—

Herewith please find my Annual Report on the Sanitary Work accomplished during the year ending 31st December, 1921.

Infectious Diseases.—During the year, 93 cases have been notified, and 46 houses have been disinfected, and I am pleased to again report that this work has been done without any claim having been made for damage to furniture or fittings.

Factories and Workshops.—There are no factories in the Division, and the Workshops and Work-places now on the register comprise:—Workshops, 6; Bakeries, 1; Tailors and Dressmakers, 4.

Periodical inspections have been made to these places, and everything found to be in order.

Cowbyres.—These have, on inspection, been found satisfactory.

Scavenging.—Two Townships, viz., Widdrington and West Chevington, are scavenged by contract under the Council, and the work has been done in a thorough manner. The same report can be made of the private scavenging throughout the Division.

Nuisances.—With the exception of a nuisance arising from a foul accumulation of sewage in a roadside ditch at Stobswood Small Holdings (which is being dealt with), no action has had to be taken.

The insanitary conditions at Widdrington Colliery have been greatly remedied by the road and drainage improvements carried out by the owners, Messrs. the Widdrington Coal Company, but these efforts should be backed up by the Council in the carrying out of the main drainage scheme.

New Buildings.—Plans for the under-mentioned buildings have been submitted and approved of, viz.: Dwelling-houses, 6; Business Premises, 5; Public Buildings, 1.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Yours Obediently,

A. ADAMS.

MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.
TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1921, for the Western Division.

Infectious Diseases.—All the cases of Infectious Diseases which have been notified to your Medical Officer of Health during the past year have been visited, and the usual precautions taken to prevent a spread of such diseases.

Slaughter-houses, &c.—The sanitary arrangements of the various Slaughter-houses, Cowbyres, Workshops and Work-places in the district were found to be in a satisfactory condition, on the dates of the several inspections made.

Nuisances.—No trouble has been felt in securing the proper abatement of nuisances, the work in all cases having been done on the service of preliminary notices.

Improvements.—A new drain with Inspection Chambers and Manholes was put in at Fairmoor. This remedied an old-standing complaint.

New Buildings.—Four plans for New Buildings were submitted under your Building Bye-laws and received the approval of the Council.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. WALKER.

TABLE I.

Causes of Death in Morpeth Rural District, 1921.

Causes of Death. (Civilians Only.)	Males.	Females.
All Causes	92	81
Enteric Fever	2	
Scarlet Fever		1
Diphtheria	1	
Influenza	4	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	4	6
Other Tuberculous Diseases		1
Cancer, Malignant Disease	15	6
Rheumatic Fever		1
Cerebral Haemorrhage, &c.	5	3
Heart Disease	8	5
Arterio-sclerosis		1
Bronchitis	6	8
Pneumonia (all forms)	6	3
Other Respiratory Diseases	1	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum		1
Diarrhoea, &c. (under 2 years)	7	4
Appendicitis and Typhlitis		1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	1	1
Puerperal Sepsis		2
Other Accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition		1
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	7	6
Suicide	3	
Other Deaths from Violence	2	2
Other Defined Diseases	20	25
Causes, ill defined or unknown		1
Deaths of Infants { Total	20	15
under 1 year { Illegitimate	2	1
Total Births	215	204
Legitimate	203	195
Illegitimate	12	9

Population 18,052, excluding Births and Deaths from 1st April, in the area transferred to Newbiggin Urban District. Population adjusted accordingly.

General Register Office,

Somerset House, London, W.C. 2.

March, 1922.

TABLE II.—**Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Analysis of Mortality** during the Year 1921.

(*Provisional figures. Populations as enumerated in 1921 have been used for the purposes of this Table. The mortality rates refer to the whole population as regards England and Wales, but only to civilians as regards London and the groups of towns.*)

BIRTH-RATE PER 1,000 TOTAL POPULA-TION.	ANNUAL DEATH-RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION.										RATE PER 1,000 BIRTHS		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DEATHS.			
	All Causes.	En-teric Fever.	Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlet Fever.	Whoop-ing Cough.	Diphtheria.	In-fluence-za.	Violence.	Diarrhoea and Enteritis (under 2 Years.)	Total Deaths under One Year.	Cases. Deaths of In-quest. Deaths in Institution or Pris-on.	Cases. Deaths of In-quest. Deaths in Institution or Pris-on.	Cases. Deaths of In-quest. Deaths in Institution or Pris-on.		
England and Wales - -	22.4	12.1	0.02	0.00	0.06	0.03	0.12	0.12	0.23	0.44	15.5	83	25.5	92.5	6.4	1.1
96 Great Towns, including London (1911 Census Populations exceeding 50,000), - -	23.3	12.3	0.01	0.00	0.08	0.04	0.13	0.15	0.23	0.40	19.3	87	33.2	92.5	6.8	0.7
148 Smaller Towns (1911 Census Populations 20,000—50,000), - -	22.7	11.3	0.01	0.00	0.05	0.03	0.11	0.11	0.26	0.35	15.6	84	17.7	93.5	5.1	1.4
London - - - -	22.3	12.4	0.01	—	0.05	0.06	9.12	0.25	0.23	0.42	21.3	80	49.2	91.6	8.2	0.2
MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT -	28.7	9.57	1.0	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.25	0.35	0.5	38	28.06	99.9	0.04	0.00

TABLE III.

DISTRICT.		Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria.	Malaria.	Erysipelas.	Ophthalmia Neonatorum.	Enteric Fever.	Pulmonary Tuberculosis.	Other Tubercular Diseases.	Encephalitis Lethargica.
Pegswood	..	3						2		
North Seaton	..	12						2		
Broomhill	..	9							4	
Chevington Drift	..	18	4						4	1
Hepscott	..	3								
Ulgham	..	3								
Widdrington	..	5	2	1	1	5				
Tritlington	..	1								
Ellington	..	1								
New Dereham	..	1								
Cresswell	..	1								
Green Tree Cottage	..	1								
Longhorsley	..							1		
Linden	..									
Thirston	..									
Todburn	..									
Southward Edge	..									
Kensington Cottage	..									
Netherwitton	..		2							
Lenrother	..		1							
Stobswood	..					1		1		1
Sheepwash	..						11			
Asylum	..							21		
TOTALS	..	58	10	1	2	6	11	29	10	2

TABLE IV.
MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Morpeth Rural District.

Name of District :

Population: 18,052.

Name of Inspector:

Messrs. ADAMS & WALKER,

HOUSING (INSPECTION OF DISTRICT) REGULATIONS, 1910.

Statistics for the Year ended December 31st, 1921.

MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT.		Total for Whole District.	Particulars for different Parishes, Wards, or Groups of Parishes to be inserted in the Vertical Columns.		REMARKS.
Number of Dwelling Houses inspected	...	450	50		
Number of Dwelling Houses found to be "Unfit"	...	5			
Complaints that Houses were Unfit.					
(a) By Householders	...	4			
(b) By Parish Councils	...	Nil.			
Closing Orders.					
(a) No. of Representations to L.A. ...	...	1			
(b) Number of Orders made	...	Nil.			
No. of Houses Voluntarily Closed.					
(a) After Notice under Sec. 28, 1919 ...	...	1			
(b) Without Notice ...	...	Nil.			
No. of Houses Demolished.					
(a) Under Demolition Orders	...				
(b) Voluntarily by Owners	...	Nil.			
No. of Houses made fit for Habitation.					
(a) After Informal Notice ...	...	5			
(b) After Service of Notice under Sec. 28, 1919 ...	...	Nil.			
(c) After Closing Order had been made ...	...	—		
(d) By Local Authority in default of Owner ...	...	7			
At Longhirst Colliery					
General character of Defects found	...	...	...
Housing Act, 1890.					
(a) No. of Representations of Obstructive Buildings	...				
(b) No. of such Buildings Demolished ...	...	Nil.			
(c) Representations as to unhealthy Areas ...	...			
Parts I and II.					

